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ABSTRACT

The bilingual education program for special education student teachers at Fordham University is described, and various cognitive and affective skills which a bilingual special education program must offer to prospective teachers are discussed. Included are explanations of four aspects of the program (cultural sensitivity, reading, oral English, and grouping techniques), identification of areas of competency (measurement and diagnostic, curriculum skills, instructional methodology skills, classroom management skills, and professional skills), and lists of specific skills in reading and language arts and second language acquisition. (IM)

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# NEW DIRECTIONS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION THROUGH A BILINGUAL BICULTURAL APPROACH

Angela Carrasquillo

One of the problems facing education today is the lack of trained bilingual special education teachers. In response to this need Fordham University has developed and established a Program to train bilingual teachers to work in special education classrooms.

It is the assumption that a student who entry into this Program, must be bilingual and must take a specialization of bilingual studies to assure that when these teachers go to the classroom, they are adequately trained to work with bilingual students. This educational aspect is very necessary since there has been an increase of students of limited English speaking ability in the United States school.

School-aged Hispanic American students have increased roughly from 1.7 million in 1960 to 3.2 in the 70's. While 60% of the people of Spanish origin live in the Southwest, New York City has the largest concentration, with estimates running from 1.5 million to 2.5. For example 23% of the school children in New York City are Puerto Ricans.

New York City reports related to the implementation of ASPIRA Consent Decree (ASPIRA is a national organization representing the educational advancement of Puerto Ricans) reveal a need for bilingual personnel in the City of New York. Its implementation asked for giving

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adequate and effective participation in the learning process to those students of Spanish surnames. ASPIRA demanded and is demanding that special educational programs be developed for these students in their own native or dominant language. The implementation of ASPIRA bilingual programs and other federally funded programs have increased the need for more bilingual teachers, in all areas, but especially in the area of bilingual special education.

The term bilingual refers to persons who demonstrate abilities in two languages, but not necessarily with equal ability. Bilingual bicultural education works more specifically with instructional adaptation than any other discipline. Therefore, bilingual education is a comprehensive educational approach that includes more than imparting English competence. Bilingual bicultural education must be defined in a context of multicultural curriculum. It use the student's primary language as the principal medium of instruction while teaching the language of the predominant culture in an organized multicultural curriculum program. It is a bicultural program because it stresses understanding and respect for the student's home culture. It also implies cultural awareness and self image.

At the beginning of the Program children are taught all cognitive areas, (e.g., math, social studies, science) first in their native language and English is taught formally in English as a Second Language classes. Instruction in English in cognitive areas begins when the student can function in that language, and experiences no academic handicap due to lack of knowledge of the language. A major aspect of

bilingual bicultural education is the inclusion in the school's curriculum of the child's historical, literacy, and cultural traditions for purposes of reinforcing identity and sense of belonging.

Fordham University has responded to bilingual education by developing a program in which through field work and formal courses, students are trained to work in bilingual settings. Students might take courses from the following list: 1) Puerto Rican and other Hispanic American culture, 2) Principles and Theories of Bilingual Education, 3) Development of Communication skills in Bilingual Students 4) Teaching Reading in Spanish to Bilingual Students, 5) Second Language Acquisition, 6) Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, 7) Workshops in the Content Areas (i,e, mathematics, science, social studies), and 8) Research in Bilingual Education.

There are four aspects that our prospective bilingual special education teachers will receive training. These are:

1) Sensitivity of the teacher toward the student environment, his culture and socio economic level. This is mainly developed by taking the course "Puerto Rican and other Hispanic American culture."

2) Reading for bilingual students. The traditional monolingual curriculum has failed to meet the educational needs of children from different language backgrounds.

Reading bilingual courses intend to train the teacher to meet the student educational needs before their self concept and probabilities for success can be destroyed in a setting in which they cannot understand. By teaching reading in the student's native language, reading is adapted to the student's developmental need. It is important that the manner in which reading is taught does not cause children to feel defeated and unsure of themselves. Teachers are trained to use small group and individualized instructional approaches to stress important skills for bilingual children such as visual discrimination, auditory discrimination, sounds of letters and letter combinations and word attack.

3) Oral English program should precede reading in English for the non-English student. Development of oral English skills greatly facilitates the acquisition of reading skills. As Thonis (1970) noted, there is a positive transfer of skills to the task of learning to read in the second language on the part of those who are literate in their native tongue. Bilingual special education students need training in what are the appropriate techniques for second language development. Teaching "English as a Second Language" and "Second Language Acquisition" are necessary courses.

4) For the bilingual special education student grouping techniques are necessary to increase their motivation to learn. Our students also receive training on how to group bilingual students by interests, needs and abilities.

There are five major areas for defining the competencies of the bilingual special education teacher. These are: measurement and diagnostic, curriculum skills, instructional methodology skills,

classroom management skills and professional skills. At the end of the program students will be able to demonstrate competencies in the following areas:

I. Measurement and Diagnostic

A) Identify and understand structural differences between the child's first and second language recognizing areas of potential interferences and positive transfer (Participants will be exposed to teaching strategies appropriate to distinct learning modes and developmental levels, particularly in the areas of Language Arts and Reading in both languages)

B) Observe classroom behaviors in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the bilingual special education student.

1. measuring student learning processes (differentiating cognitive/perceptual, and adjustment areas of functioning.)
2. identify and appropriately use standardized and criterion referenced tests to screen and assess each student's learning process and achievement.
3. identify advantages and disadvantages of standardized tests for language dominance. (A high number of Spanish speaking students are wrongly classified as "mentally retarded" on the basis of the test, and placed in mentally retarded classes)

4. determine language dominance of pupils in various domains of language usage.

C) Utilize a variety of assessment approaches that take into account the language and culture of the student.

D) Enumerate factors (cultural, cognitive, linguistic) that contribute to learning difficulties in bilingual learners.

E) To use assessment results to determine teaching strategies for each student.

II. Curriculum Skills

A) Develop a broad first and second language competency (e.g., listening skills, expressive and receptive skills.)

B) Develop, maintain and adjust classroom curriculum to meet the individual "special needs of students."

C) Define areas of curriculum emphasis (i.e; language development) which are logically developed from diagnostic processes.

D) Translate educational diagnostic information into specific skill lessons in reading, language arts, mathematics and other cognitive areas.

E) Evaluate existing curriculum-both commercial and teacher- and prepared materials of instruction identifying.

1) Suitability to bilingual special education students, language proficiencies and cultural experiences.

2) Objectives, scope and sequence in terms of concepts, content and students special needs.

F) Plan and implement instruction in various subject matter areas, e.g., art, music, science and physical education.

G) Develop and implement reading instruction on both individual and small group basis.

H) Develop an understanding of their role in the social environment (family, community, cultural heritage, etc.) by studing:

1) The culture and history of the group's heritage.

2) The contributions of the group to the history and culture of the United States.

I) Integrate educational media and technology into the bilingual special education curriculum.

III. Instructional Methodology Skills

A) Write and apply behavioral objectives for all areas of the curriculum.

B) Apply adequate teaching strategies which are congruent with modalities, preferences and developmental levels of bilingual special students.

C) Develop a prescription of essential skills in at least two content areas for assigned bilingual special education students.

E) Make tentative grouping suggestions using record cards, observations and other diagnostic devices; the ability to organize a group of pupils for instruction.

F) Knows procedures to be used in distributing, selecting and sharing materials in the classroom.

IV. Classroom Management Skills

A. Utilize effective classroom management techniques like

organization and general environment procedures for optimal learning.

B) To keep each student's profile up to date, entering appropriate criterion attainment.

C) Develop motivational activities to children to follow in order to develop good study skills and habits.

D) Use daily cultural experiences to develop children's interest to develop oral expression.

E) Develop behavioral management approaches related to:

1) behavior modification
2) crisis intervention
3) classroom discipline

V. Professional Skills

A) Knowledge of the history and philosophy of bilingual bicultural education and its implications when dealing with bilingual special education students.

B) Exchange information and views with parents, teachers and classmates concerning the rationale, goals and activities of the special education bilingual program.

C) Identify and utilize available school and community resources in and outside the classroom.

D) Knowledge of special education programs, trends, research and problems.

E) Describe the process of becoming bilingual and know how to employ first and second language acquisition techniques in the classroom.

These competencies require specific skills to be developed by the student practitioner. The following are examples of the specific skills required in reading, language arts and second language acquisition in the Bilingual Special Education Program.

Reading and Language Arts

1) Identifies similarities and differences between reading for bilingual learners and reading for monolingual learners.

2) Names techniques for determining students language dominance.

3) Enumerates principles of identifying the bilingual child.

4) Defines reading readiness when dealing with bilingual learners.

5) Identifies comprehension and critical reading abilities for bilingual learners.

6) Identifies ways in which a teacher can promote more active reading while working with students with language difficulties.

7) Identify important comprehension skills in teaching reading in Spanish.

8) Identifies the cultural aspects that might influence the bilingual child reading process.

9) Identifies the importance of language development in pre-school and its implications for the child reading success in the elementary school.

10) Defines the basal reading approach and how to use it with bilingual special education students.

11) Identifies grouping practices in a bilingual classroom.

12) Identifies the procedures and approaches in teaching literature to bilingual learners.

13) Writes reading skills in behavioral terms.

14) Identifies characteristics of bilingual pupils who need individual reading assistance.

15) Describes how to evaluate sequential development of important skills.

16) Lists common classroom methods of stimulating growth in reading vocabulary for bilingual learners.

17) Develops Spanish word recognition exercises.

18) Identifies current reference materials for teaching reading to bilingual learners.

19) Constructs Spanish or English Spanish reading tests for bilingual learners.

20) Enumerate factors that contribute to reading difficulties in bilingual learners.

21) Identifies techniques for teaching writing to bilingual learners.

Second Language Acquisition

1) Identifies cultural aspects of learning and teaching a second language.

2) Identifies the problems connected with the influence

of the first language on the acquisition of the second language.

3) Traces the sequential stages of development in the acquisition of a second language.

4) Explain the psychological and sociolinguistic aspects of acquiring a second language.

5) Identifies techniques for judging recognition and comprehension of vocabulary in English.

6) Enumerates steps in teaching reading to a child who is learning English as a second language.

7) Compares and contrasts different reading materials for English as a second language.

8) Identifies reinforcement activities for second language instruction.

9) Writes behavioral objectives in preparing daily lesson for English as a second language.

10) Describes different visual aids to be used in teaching English as a Second Language.

11) Constructs informal ESL tests.

12) Establish similarities and differences between the role of the regular English teacher and the ESL teacher.

13) Enumerates the basic skills students need in reading a second language.

The various aspects of bilingual special education treated in this paper are not the only aspects to be considered. This is only an attempt to describe the various cognitive, affective and skills domains a Bilingual Special Education Program must offer to prospective teachers interested in working in bilingual settings. It is the hope that through this bilingual bicultural approach bilingual special education students could be better served and taught, since it gives every human being the opportunity for growth.